

The INSPIRATION of the 4016.66.9.  
**NEW TESTAMENT Asserted:**  
The INTEGRITY of the  
SACRED WRITERS Vindicated;  
AND THE  
**Method of SALVATION**  
BY A  
**REDEEMER Confirmed.**

In ANSWER to a Late Book of Mr. Chubb's,  
ENTITLED,  
*The True Gospel of Jesus Christ Asserted.*

Humbly offered to Publick Consideration,  
And in particular to all those who esteem themselves, or  
are esteemed by others to be Holders forth of New-  
Light, and Great Proficients in Moral Argument.

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**In a LETTER to that AUTHOR.**

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By PHILELEUTHERUS CHRISTIANUS.

*Hold fast the Form of sound Words, which thou hast heard of me, in Faith  
and Love which is in Christ. 2 Tim. i. 13.*

*For the Prophecy came not in Old Time by the Will of Man; but Holy  
Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. 2 Pet. i. 21.*

*For they being ignorant of God's Righteousness, and going about to establish  
their own Righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the Righteous-  
ness of God. For Christ is the End of the Law for Righteousness to every  
one that believeth. Rom. x. 3, 4.*

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**L O N D O N:**

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out Temple-Bar.

M D C C X X X I X.

А ТИ ЗАМЛЯЗЫЧИ  
САГЕД ВИЛЛЕС АНГЕЛОВ  
СИРУСИ САГЕД

# ИОИГАУДА? в ботаник





A

## LETTER, &c.

SIR,

S the many Treatises you have published have render'd your Name well known to the World, so none of them I apprehend has occasion'd more Discourse than your late Book, entitled, *The True Gospel of Jesus Christ asserted; wherein is shewn what is, and what is not that Gospel, what was the Great and Good End it was intended to serve, &c.* It was a good while after its coming out before I had an Opportunity of perusing a Piece which made a great Noise in the World, and I must own my Curiosity was the more heighten'd by the many Reflections I heard made upon it; though this did not prejudice me either against the Author, or the Performance; but I determined on that Account to read it over with all possible Impartiality, that I might my self judge of it, being inclined from the Idea I had entertain'd of the Author to think

B

much

much more favourably than I found they did with whom I had convers'd, I am still of the same Opinion as to some Points, which I believe occasioned the severest Reflections from some who had treated you with the greatest Bitterness of Language; but was exceedingly surprized to find the Bulk of your Book, which is design'd to answer the Title of the True Gospel of Jesus Christ, entirely the Reverse, of what I had reason to expect, and that the natural and necessary Consequences of the Principles you went upon, were subversive of the Gospel deliver'd by Christ and his Apostles. Upon this I made some Observations upon the Principles you laid down, without any Thought at first of making them Publick; but, as the more I read and considered the apparent Tendency of your Principles, the more I was shocked at the Consequences which by the most natural deduction flow from them; from hence I was gradually induced to think of communicating to you and the World, the Result of my Animadversions on the Drift and Tendency of your Principles, which strike at the Root of the Christian Religion. But this I would premise at first, that I would by no means be understood, when I argue against the Principles advanc'd by you, as tho' I charged you with holding such Opinions as I conceive are contained in the Principles you assert: No, I protest the contrary, for that would be to load you with Imputations, which I verily believe you abhor. It would represent you, as a most insincere Man, and an Underminer of that Holy Religion, which you not only make a Profession of, in common with others, but for which you express the most tender Concern: I hope I shall always make a Distinction betwixt the Principles and the Man, and be ready to make all charitable Allowances to those whose Sentiments differ from my own; and where,

where, as in the present Case, the Consequences of any Principles seem to be subversive of the Truth, tho' I would endeavour to the utmost to set the Consequences of such Tenets in their true and proper Light, and expose them in all their pernicious Effects, I would at the same Time desire to be governed by that Spirit of Charity, which is enjoined by that Religion which I am most tenderly concern'd for the Credit of, that Charity which *hopeth all Things, believeth all Things.* Agreeably hereunto I declare that I believe you were not apprehensive, that those were the Consequences of your Opinions, which evidently appear to me, to flow directly from them. In your Preface you say, " I have in the following Sheets shewn what are the True Grounds of our Acceptance with God, and likewise what are the True Grounds upon which Sinners may reasonably expect to obtain the Divine Mercy." I readily admit that this is in short the Substance of the Gospel of Christ, the Great Design and End of a Revelation from God. How well you have explained this Gospel, and thereby answer'd the Design, which might be expected from your Title, is my Business to examine. I shall begin with your Notion of the private Opinions of the Apostles. You tell us, p. 46. That the "Gospel of Jesus Christ is not any particular private Opinion of any, or of all the Writers of the History of his Life and Ministries, nor any private Opinion of any, or of all those whom he sent out to publish his Gospel to the World; nor is any of their Reasonings, or Conclusions founded on, or drawn from such Opinions, any Part of that Gospel." What you here lay of private or particular Opinions is unquestionably True; but your way of applying this Observation, is, I apprehend, attended with such Consequences,

as I would in Charity hope you were not aware of. You every where allow the Gospel of Christ to have been a Gift of God to Men of the most inestimable Excellency and Value, and your Great Design in writing this Book, you assert to have been to rescue the Gospel of Christ from the False Explications and Doctrines which have pretended to fatter themselves on the Gospel, and to be contained in it, but which are in reality spurious, and destructive of the Scope and Tenour of it. And undoubtedly many of your Lamentations of the Abuse the Gospel has suffer'd, and the Wounds it has receiv'd in the *House* of its pretended *Friends*, are well grounded and just. 'Tis certain, that from the very Infancy of Christianity down to our present Times, there have been some, and for the greatest part of the Time very great Numbers of profess'd Christians and Ministers of Christ, that have been indefatigable in building their own selfish, base, and abominable Schemes, upon the nominal Foundation of the Gospel of Christ. St. Paul declares, that even in his Time *Antichrist* began to *Work*; and in the Space of a few Ages the Antichristian Scheme was so far advanced, as, if not to overturn the Christian Religion, yet miserably to deface and obscure it, insomuch that the Papists, even to this Day, glory in the Universality of their Corruptions; and from a Notion of the Necessity of there being always a Visible Church, challenge the Protestants to shew where their Church was before *Luther*. For many Ages such was the prevalence of Idolatrous Superstition and Priestly Tyranny, that though there undoubtedly were always some that adhered to the Truth and Purity of the Christian Religion, yet their Number being small, and the Difficulties which they laboured under great, perhaps it would be no easy Task for us of

of the present Age to prove, that there were always such True Professors of Christianity. The Woman in the 12th of the *Revelations* (by which was meant the True Disciples of Jesus Christ) was forced to fly into the *Wilderness*, where she had a Place prepared of God, Rev. xii. 6. But your Misfortune is, that instead of delivering the *True Gospel* from the Obscurities it has sustained, and cleansing it from the Corruptions, by which it has been almost overwhelmed, which is an Attempt highly laudable in itself, in which many great and good Writers have been engaged with great Success heretofore, and for the Repetition of which there is still a great deal of Cause in the World: you have been to unfortunate as to fall into an Extreme, almost, if not altogether, as hurtful to the Cause which you undertake to defend, as that which you oppose. I am very ready to allow what indeed makes a considerable Part of your Book, That the Civil Magistrate has nothing to do with Religion, provided there are no Principles propagated under that Name, which are destructive to the Peace and well-being of Civil Society, which by the Way is the only justifiable Reason that can be assigned, for laying any legal Restraints or Burdens upon Papists: That all the Business of the Magistrate with respect to Religion, is equally to protect all peaceable Christians in their natural Rights and Liberties; that there ought to be no Encouragements or Discouragements, negative or positive annexed, to the Oblervance, or Non-ob-servance of any particular Set of Modes and Forms of Worship, by the Legislative Authority; that it should not be allowed to any Set of Men of any particular Denomination, under Colour of an Allowance, or a Deputation from the Civil Power, to compose any System of Religious Articles, without a professed Compliance with, and Belief  
of

of which, either Ministers or private Christians should be debarr'd from Christian Communion, or deprived of the common Rights of good and useful Members of a Commonwealth : The Introduction of the Hierarchy must be acknowledged by all that are tolerably conversant with Ecclesiastical History, and the Powers delegated by the Civil Power into the Hands of Clergymen, together with the immense Riches bestowed on the Church, which a misguided zeal for the Honour of God first began, and the Artifice and Avarice of ambitious and hypocritical Priests increased to a most dangerous and unbounded Degree : This must, I say, be acknowledg'd to have been the Source of the most deplorable Corruption of the Religion of Christ, and of the almost total Destruction of his faithful Disciples in the World. The Papal Priesthood that they might support and perpetuate themselves in the Possession of the Power and Riches of the World, which they had in a Manner engrossed to themselves, did not fail to use their utmost Endeavours, by debasing the Purity, and corrupting the Simplicity of the Gospel, to screen themselves in their unjust Acquisitions : To this Cause are we to impute the Doctrines of the superior Dignity of the Priesthood, of their Power to absolve Sins, of Purgatory, and of Ecclesiastical Traditions. And who can deserve better of Mankind than by exposing those base and unchristian Measures ? The Jealousy of Christians can never be too much raised against such sort of Practices ; and the Predecessors of the present Christians have suffer'd so extremely by these wicked Contrivances, that we can never be too watchful against all, even the most minute Approaches of any that would attempt to rebuild the same Structure, which in this Nation has been in a good Measure demolished : But then when you are

are overthrowing the unjust Pretensions of aspiring Clergymen, whilst you are shewing the unwarrantableness of their Claims, as to the pretended Power of forgiving Sins, or demonstrating the Absurdity of any Doctrines, that would sap the Foundations of Morality and Virtue ; take Care whilst you are weeding out the *Tares*, you don't pull up the *Wheat* also, as I conceive you do in your Notion of the *private Opinion of the Apostles* ; one of which Sort you will have to be what you call the Beginning of St. John's History, John i. 1, 2, 3. *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ; the same was in the Beginning with God, all Things were made by him, and without him was not any Thing made that was made.* What is here spoken of our Blessed Lord, you would have us believe is no Part of the Gospel, that it does not contain any Propositions, that are obligatory on the Faith of Christians. It is only a Parcel of Assertions that St. John had a Fancy to prefix to his Account of the Life of his Lord and Master ; and whether he is right or not in these his private Sentiments, the Cause of Christianity, or of the Gospel, according to you, is not at all affected thereby : Now in this Opinion of yours, as well as in the whole sixth Section, you appear to me to be not only grievously mistaken, but your Misapprehensions are attended with the most dangerous Consequences, which I will endeavour, I hope *in the Spirit of Meekness*, which our common Profession of being Christians obliges us to be influenc'd by, to represent. This I shall do with a Regard to your own Service, as well as of those who may be in Danger of being carried away by the Authority of your Name, and the Positiveness of your Assertions. In the first Place then to consider the Introduction to St. John's History, as you are pleased to call it, I am  
willing

willing to comply with you in the Term *History*, and would avoid calling it as it commonly is, the *Gospel of St. John*, because That is what you would be displeas'd with, inasmuch as here, and in other Places of your Book, you will not allow some Part of the Writings of St. *John*, as well as of others, and perhaps of all the Apostles, to be any Part of the *Gospel of Jesus Christ*, neither will this Compliance of mine be of any Difservice to the Design I aim at, provided I am able, as I conceive I shall be, to prove that this Introduction is as much a Part, and perhaps as essential an One, of the true *Gospel of Jesus Christ*, on which the Hopes and Happiness of Christians are founded, as any which you are able to assign, and are willing to admit as a Part of the *Gospel of Christ*.

In order to make this appear I would observe to you, that the *Gospel of Christ* depends not only upon the Internal, but also upon the External Proofs of its Credibility and Reality; as in Mr. *Chubb* I have not an Adversary of the Christian Religion to contend with, but a professed Friend and Advocate for it, I am no way oblig'd to prove that there have been External Testimonies to the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Religion: I know you agree with me in this Point, and they are, in Conjunction with the Substance of the Doctrine contained in it, Demonstrative Evidences of the Truth of the Religion which we profess: All that I have to do therefore in the present Case is to shew that these Propositions of St. *John* are True, and are supported by as much Evidence as any of the Doctrines which he relates as having been taught by our Lord, and in which Mr. *Chubb* will have his *True Gospel* to consist. To make the Matter clear, I must desire you to recollect, that our Lord himself and his Apostles after him, were very frequently making their

their Appeal, to what had been asserted and taught by *Moses*, and the Prophets of the Old Testament Dispensation, and the Prophecies which are found in their Writings, as a Testimony and Confirmation of our Lord's Character and Mission. You very well know, Sir, that the Prophecies of the coming of the Messiah, the Saviour, were interspers'd in the Writings of the Old Testament, even from the most ancient Account of Things. At the very Beginning of the World, he was promis'd to our First Parents immediately upon the Fall, as the Healer of the Breach that was made by the first Transgression, under the Title of *the Seed of the Woman*; that he was some Ages after promis'd to *Abraham*, as a Descendant of his according to the *Flesh*, Gen. xii. 4. after that, that he should spring from the Tribe of *Judah*, Gen. xlix. 10. after that, that he should come of the Family of *David*, with this miraculous Circumstance annex'd to the whole, that he should by a special Interposition of Divine Power, be born of a Virgin, Isa. vii. 14. Agreeably to this Scheme of Providence, Two of the *Evangelists* begin their *Histories* with an Account of the Genealogical Descent of our Lord, from the authentick Records of the Jewish Nation, and from them prove, that our Lord had a just Claim to be receiv'd by the *Jews* in Quality of the True Messiah, in Virtue of his Birth and Descent, as to his Human Generation. The other Two begin their *Histories* with an Account, that as He was the *Son of Man* in one Respect, in another He was the *Son of God*: Thus, *Mark* i. 1. and *St. John*, who is more particular, *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God*, &c. "These Propositions (you say) for any Thing that appears to the contrary, are only the *Private Opinion* of *St. John*, who wrote the History of Christ's Life

" and Ministry, and they are no Part of Christ's  
 " Gospel, viz. of that Gospel which he preach'd  
 " to *the Poor*." By the Way, this last Sentence,  
*viz.* Of that Gospel which he preach'd to *the Poor*,  
 appears to me to want a pretty deal of Explanation;  
 you seem to fix a considerable Emphasis  
 upon the Gospel of Christ, as the Gospel which  
 was preached *to the Poor*. Now, what in the  
 Name of common Sense, has the Gospel's being  
 preached *to the Poor* to do with your Argument,  
 that you lay such a Stress upon it, and mention  
 it at least twice more in this Section? Whether  
 you understand by our Saviour's Saying, *To the Poor  
the Gospel is Preached*, the temporal or the spiritual  
 Poor, I cannot see how it makes either for or  
 against you in the least, and it lies on you to shew  
 that it does, or else the World will be apt to  
 think that this Sentence is to go for nothing: But  
 whatever be the Meaning of this obscure Part of  
 your Argument, you are very plain and positive  
 in averring, that it does not appear that these Pro-  
 positions deliver'd by the Apostle in Relation  
 to our Lord's Nature and Person, do oblige us  
 to receive them in any higher Sense than as the  
 private Opinion of the Writer, and consequently  
 that no Inferences to be deduced from them do at  
 all affect the Belief or the Conduct of Christians.  
 As I conceive this to be a very bold, and very dan-  
 gerous Assertion, I will endeavour to convince you  
 that you are mistaken, and that it is such a  
 Mistake, as is naturally productive of such Conse-  
 quences as will reduce the Whole of Christianity  
 to an utter Uncertainty, and undermine the Foun-  
 dations of That Gospel, which you would be  
 thought to be most zealously concern'd for the  
 Confirmation of.

In the First Place then, If the Propositions  
 asserted by the Apostle, That our Lord Jesus was  
 the

*the Word, or Logos, that this Logos, was with God, and that he was God ; That the same was in the Beginning with God, That all Things were made by him, &c.* If these Propositions concerning our Lord, are only the *private Opinion* of St. John, it's possible he might be mistaken in these his Assertions. Nay, I'll go further, and say, that he was mistaken : For, as a *private Opinion*, when the Term is used by you or by any other Writer, denotes only a particular Sentiment of any Person, without any higher Authority for it than that of his own Opinion, in Opposition to a Notion or Sentiment infused or imparted by a special Communication from God, St. John must of necessity deliver not what was True, but absolutely False, in these Assertions of his, wherein he declares, that our Lord had an Existence before the Creation of the World, that he had a Divine Nature (*and the Word was God*) and that he was possessed of Divine Creative Power; (*all Things were made by him :*) For as St. John had not himself an Existence, till some Thousands of Years after the World was created, it was impossible for him to know any Thing at all of what passed in any of the Periods that preceded the Creation, without the supernatural Assistance of a Revelation from God : The Revelation by Moses, would inform him only in General, that the World was created by God : It was so far from informing him that this was performed by the Sacred Person by him called the *Logos*, or *the Son of God*, that it does not so much as give an Account of the Existence of such a Being ; so that I hope you will allow, nay, I insist upon it that you must allow, that he could not have this Account from the Revelation that preceded the Age in which he lived : As to his own private Conceptions that he was capable of forming, or the Inferences to be drawn by him, from the Ob-

servations he might make on the Life, Doctrine, and Miracles of our Lord, they could reach no further than to convince him that our Lord was a very great Prophet, that he exceeded all that had gone before him in the Goodness of his Life, and in the Excellency of his Doctrine: By Excellency I mean both Purity and Plainness, as well as in the Greatness and Number of the Miracles which he wrought in Confirmation of his Doctrine and Mission: But still, as Sensation and Reflection are the only Canals by which Knowledge is conveyed to the Human Mind, the utmost Strength of the Apostle's Faculties could carry him no farther than to the Knowledge of the Particulars I have mention'd. The Essential and Eternal Dignity, the Divine Essence and Power of our Lord, must still have remained an absolute and unfathomable Secret to St. John; being unprovided of any Means of attaining to such Knowledge by the Exercise of his own human Faculties, nothing less than immediate Inspiration could furnish him with the Knowledge of these Things: And from hence it is most certain, that upon your Hypothesis, he was a Liar, and the Truth was not in him; for this most evident Reason, that in a very solemn and serious Manner, whilst he is assuming the Character of an Apostle, and an inspired Man, he asserts Things with the Knowledge of which you suppose him not to be inspired, and which it was otherwise impossible for him to know.

As this Reasoning is directly and perfectly demonstrative, by your Supposition there will be such a Door opened for a Torrent of Infidelity to enter at, and to sweep away all Revealed Religion at once, as I hope Mr. Chubb will, upon a serious Recollection, tremble at the Thoughts of his being accessory to: I am sensible, it has been too much the Practice of Christians to charge one another with

with all the odious Appellations which belong to the Consequences which they apprehend to follow from any Principles broach'd by those against whom they write: Far be it from me to act such a Part as this; I believe you were not apprized of those Consequences which I think are justly deducible from the Principles you lay down; it appears most evident to me that yours are very erroneous: But, as even your warmest Opponents, and those that speak the severest Things of you as an Heretick, a Betrayer of the Church of which you are a visible Member, &c. never pretend to accuse you of an immoral or an intemperate Life; I have an unfeigned Charity towards you, and *hope the best Things concerning you, even Things that accompany Salvation.* If you believe me then, in this solemn Protestation which I make, you will have no Cause to be offended with me, for animadverting upon your Principles: As you love the Liberty of proposing your own Sentiments to the World, it must be taken for granted, that you are willing to give the same Liberty you take; I shall therefore proceed with the same Freedom to lay before you the Consequences which appear to me to flow from your Principles, with relation to the *private Opinions* of the Apostles, and particularly with respect to this Passage of St. John, relating to the Person and Dignity of our Blessed Lord. Your own Words on this important Subject are these; ‘ And there-  
‘ fore whether Christ was the *Logos* or *Word*,  
‘ whether he was with God, and was God, or  
‘ whether he made all Things, in the Sense in  
‘ which St. John uses these Terms, or not, is of  
‘ no Consequence to us, because these Points are  
‘ no Part of Christ’s Gospel, and they are what  
‘ the Salvation of Mankind is no way concerned  
‘ with; whether Christ pre-existed or not, or  
‘ whether he was the Agent employed by God,  
‘ in

' in making this visible World, or not, are Points  
 ' which do not affect the saving of Mens Souls  
 ' at all, it being sufficient for us to know, that  
 ' he was the Sent of God, and that the *Word of*  
 ' *the Lord in his Mouth was Truth.*"

Now in this Passage of yours are evidently contained the following Propositions.

I. That it is of no Consequence to us, whether what St. John asserts, concerning our Saviour's Person and Dignity, as the *Logos*, as pre-existing with God the Father, and as the Creator of all Things, be true or not.

II. That *the Salvation of Mankind is not in the least concern'd with the Truth or Falshood of these Things.*

This Second Position is laid down as a Reason to support the foregoing one.

The Third is, That it is *sufficient for us*, that is, for all Christians to know, that *he was the Sent of God, and that the Word of the Lord in his Mouth was Truth.*

To this last Position I agree with all my Heart, and am not without Hopes of convincing you, that if you adhere to this in its proper Extent, and even its immediate and necessary Consequences, you will be obliged to give up the two former.

Your First Position is, that it is of no Consequence to us, whether what St. John says concerning our Saviour's Person and Dignity, as the *Logos*, as pre-existing with God the Father, and as the Creator of all Things, be true or not.

Now, Sir, whatever your Imaginations may be as to the Consequence of these Things, I must insist upon it on the contrary, that it is just of as much Consequence to all Christians, as the Truth or Falshood of Christianity in general is; and this

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I am certain you will allow to be a Matter of the last Importance: But to be more explicit, I believe it will appear upon a more deliberate Consideration, That, if these Positions of St. John are not True, equally True, and equally Matter of Divine Inspiration with any other Part of his History, as you chuse to have it called, we shall be by no means able to prove that any Part of the Writings of the Apostles is true, because it will be impossible for you or for any Man to produce greater or better Evidences for the Truth or Credibility of any historical or doctrinal Propositions that are contained in the New Testament, than may be produced in Support of the Truth of these. The Certainty of Inspiration in general as predicated of the Writings of the New Testament, you every where admit; since then you han't thought fit to point out any other of the private Opinions, the Positions that are *of no Consequence to Christians*, as being *no Part of the Gospel of Christ*, in St. John's History but these, you have left your Readers to conclude, that there is no other Part of St. John, but what you approve of, and acknowledge as the Word of God. You also assert, that this short Introductory Part are St. John's own Words, that is, they are his *private Opinion*, and not the Effect of Inspiration. Now it having been already proved, that it was not possible for St. John, by any Medium of conveying Knowledge that any Mortal is possessed of, to arrive at the Knowledge of what he here asserts, and lays down with as much Authority, as he does any other Part of his Gospel, from hence it must most certainly follow, that he was an Imposter, and a false Prophet; and if he was so in one Point, there can be no Dependance upon any thing he writes, he never having given the least Hint, but that he had the same Assurance of these, as he had of any other

other Things, or any other Doctrines which he mentions in any other Part of his Account of our Lord and his Ministrations: And as the Apostle declares that our Lord promised, that when he was gone from them, they should have no Cause to lament it, but he would send them the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, *to guide them into all Truth*, *John xvi. 7, and 13.* From hence it will manifestly follow, that if what he says in the Beginning of the Account he gives of our Lord, be no more than his own *private Opinion*, and was not communicated by the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, equally with the other Parts of his *History* or *Gospel*, and he has given no Intimation to the contrary, the Credit of the whole must of course fall to the Ground; and the Misfortune is, that he cannot fall by himself; but the rest of his Brethren, the other Apostles, whose Writings are receiv'd as inspired, must also fall with him, at least as far as they have deliver'd the same Doctrines as we are now discoursing of, which I believe you must acknowledge to have been the Doctrines of the Apostles in general, either more or less expressly, according to the Length or Brevity of the Writings they have left the World.

II. Your Second Position is, that the Salvation of Mankind is not in the least concern'd with the Truth or Falshood of these Things.

This Second Position is laid down as a Reason to support the foregoing one.

As all that you have said on this Head of the *Private Opinions* of the Apostles, is deliver'd with great Uncontiousness, if not Temerity, I shall now, as I justly may, insist upon your taking the LabouringOar into your own Hands, and put you upon proving, what you are forward in positively asserting, That this Passage of St. John is only his  
private

private Opinion, or else it is but reasonable to expect that you should ingenuously retract what you have deliver'd on this Head. A Man that affects to be distinguish'd in the foremost Rank of those that insist upon every Man's having a Right to think for himself, and that the Liberty of private Judgment is the natural Privilege of all Men without Distinction, will make but an indifferent Figure, if he should assume any Airs of Dogmaticalness or infallibility; you must be presumed not to expect any Deference at all to be paid to your mere Opinions, as decisive in any Case, which is apprehended to be of Importance, without producing the requisite Proofs to confirm the Truth of them: And therefore, Sir, you ought not to take it amiss if I tell you, that it is incumbent on you, if you would make out what you have asserted, to produce plain and positive Proofs, that this Passage of St. John is no Part of Divine Revelation; and at the same time you must prove the Divine Authority of the Body of his *History* or *Gospel*, and that the Doctrinal Propositions, or Moral Institutes are in reality what you acknowledge them to be, the Effect of Inspiration: Nay, further than this, it will lie upon you to shew that notwithstanding they have always been receiv'd by Christians, as equally a Part of inspired Writ with the rest of St. John's *History*, or Account of our Saviour and his Ministrations, that they are nevertheless a spurious Addition to the Writings of this Evangelist, and foisted in in some Period or other, since the Days of this Apostle: This you are obliged to do, because you allow that they were the *private Opinion* of St. John and no other; and as I take this to be a Work which, upon due Consideration, you will never attempt, I hope it will have its proper Influence, and help you to discern the wrong Apprehensions you are fallen into.

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Thus

Thus having laid before you some Facts which you will be obliged to prove, or drop the Notion you have advanced as to the *private Opinion* of St. John, I shall now say something of the Importance of these Propositions concerning the Original, Dignity, and Power of our Blessed Lord; and here I think it is very observable, that in the Words immediately following the Passage you have quoted as the *private Opinion* of St. John, are contained a Reason to prove the Importance of the foregoing Positions, *In him was Life, and the Life was the Light of Men*, John i. 4. These Words I take to be a short and very expressive Explanation of the great Intention of our Lord's coming into the World, as undertaking the Great and Gracious Design of the Salvation of Men, which is by St. Paul expressed by the Phrase of bringing *Life and Immortality to Light*.

This *Word* or *Logos*, in the 14th Verse, St. John says, *was made Flesh*, (or joined to the Human Nature) and dwelt among us, and we beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth. After having first given an Account of the Original and Quality of our Redeemer, and mentioned the great Design of his taking Flesh upon him, he goes on like a very methodical Writer, to mention the Publick Testimony of John the Baptist: *John seeing Jesus coming unto him, saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the World.* This is he of whom I said, after me cometh a Man which is preferred before me; for he was before me. And I knew him not: But that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with Water. And John bare Record, saying, *I saw the Spirit descending from Heaven, like a Dove, and it abode upon him.* And I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with Water, the same said unto me, Upon

Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost, John i. 29, &c. Now in this Passage wherein we have the Attestation of *John the Baptist* to our Saviour's Person, Character, and Mission, is briefly comprehended the whole Scheme of the Gospel by a Redeemer: As first, he is declared to be the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sins of the World. *John the Baptist* came to bear Witness of the Light, that all Men through him might believe, ver. 7. He was sent from God to perform this Office, ver. 6. He preached the Doctrine of Repentance, but made no Pretensions to the Power of forgiving Sins, but referred his Hearers to one that was just coming after him, without any Comparison his Superior, whose Shoes (says he) *I am not worthy to bear*, Matt. iii. 11. Here you have the same Doctrine of our Lord's pre-existence, of his being the Son of God, one that should baptize with the Holy Ghost, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sins of the World. What can be a more full or express Confirmation of what St. *John* says at his first Entrance upon the Account which he has given us of our Lord's Person and Office? He is asserted to have existed from Eternity: *For he was before me.* In so saying, *John the Baptist* could mean nothing less than that our Lord had an Eternal Existence; it being certain, that as to his human Descent, he was many Months younger than *John the Baptist*, for when the Angel Gabriel was sent to the Virgin *Mary*, to tell her, that our Lord should be born of her, at the same time that he acquaints her therewith, he tells her, her Cousin *Elizabeth*, the Mother of *John the Baptist*, was gone six Months with Child, Luke i. 36. 'Tis certain, therefore, that *John the Baptist* must be understood to speak of our Lord's Divine Nature, when he says he was before him: And

when *Zacharias*, after his extraordinary Dumbness, was restored to his Speech at the Circumcision of the Child ; and prophesied of the Office which his Son *John* was to perform when come to Years, he says, *And thou Child shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest* ; for thou shalt go before the Face of the Lord to prepare his Ways : To give Knowledge of Salvation unto his People by the Remission of their Sins, Luke i. 76,77. From what has been quoted from the Testimony of *John the Baptist*, as well as the Declaration of the inspired *Zacharias*. The Passage of St. *John* which you object against, is abundantly confirmed, so that you will be reduced to this Dilemma, either to own that St. *John* was inspired, in saying what he does of our Lord's exalted Character and Dignity, or else you must pass the same Censure on two inspired Persons more, *John the Baptist* and *Zacharias* : That *John the Baptist* has testified to the same Purpose as St. *John*, I have just observed to you, as also I have referred you to the Words of *Zacharias* to the same Effect : He calls our Saviour *the Lord* and *the Highest* ; and says, that the Design of his coming into the World was to make the Knowledge of Salvation, and the means of obtaining the Remission of Sins manifest, or in the Language of *John the Baptist*, to be the *Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sins of the World*. Thus it will be necessary for you either to acknowledge St. *John* as an inspired Writer, in what he says in the contested Passage, or else you must produce your Arguments to invalidate the Testimony of *John the Baptist*, of *Zacharias*, and St. *Luke*. Thus you see, that whilst you thought you had but St. *John* to contend against, there are two or three more of the same Sacred Character with him, whose Evidence it is necessary for you to overthrow, or to give up the Cause ;

Cause; nay, it would be no Difficulty to prove, that all the Authors of the New Testament must share the same Fate as St. John, unless there be either of them that has not taught the same Doctrine; and even upon the Supposition that in some of their Writings the same Things may not be found in so many express Terms; yet in this I will be positive, that you will not find any thing contradictory thereunto; and there will still be one Difficulty remaining which you will never be able to get over; that there will be as much and as good Proof for the Validity of what has been delivered by the abovementioned Persons, as you will be able to produce on the Side of the Divine Authority of the Authors of any Part of the New Testament; and by Consequence, as the Authority of St. John must rest upon the same Foot with that of any of the others, if one be discarded, the rest must fare in like manner, and so we shall be rid of all of them at once.

But as I am permitted at present to suppose, that those Parts of what we receive as Sacred Writ, which you have not pointed out as merely *private Opinions*, are really inspired, I shall take a little farther Notice of the Words of Zacharias, who represents the coming of our Saviour amongst Men to be with one principal View, to certify Mankind of the Method whereby Salvation and the Remission of Sins was to be obtained, and that this was the Effect of the tender Mercy of God, whereby the Day-spring from on high was to visit Mankind; to give Light to them which sit in Darkness, and in the Shadow of Death, to guide our Feet into the Way of Peace, Luke i. 78, 79. From hence I think it is evidently to be inferred, that the Knowledge of obtaining Salvation and Remission of Sins, was, even to those who enjoyed a Divine Revelation at that time, not perfectly clear and visible.

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The Law of Moses was not a plain, full, and explicit Declaration of the Method of Salvation, and Deliverance from the Guilt of Sin; its Sacrifices, its ceremonial Observances, and Oblations, were not capable in themselves of purging the Soul from the Guilt of dead Works. The Tabernacle of Moses was only a Figure for the time then present, in which was offered both Gifts and Sacrifices, that could not make him that did the Service perfect, as pertaining to the Conscience, which stood only in Meats, and Drinks, and divers Washings and carnal Ordinances imposed on them until the time of Reformation, Heb. ix. 9, 10. The whole Scheme of the Mosaick Dispensation was but a figurative Representation of better Things to come, of a better and more perfect Propitiation. The Blood of Bulls and of Goats, was not sufficient to wash away the Stains and Impurity of Sin: But Christ being come an High Priest of good Things to come, by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle, not made with Hands, that is to say, not of this Building; neither by the Blood of Goats and Calves, but by his own Blood he entred in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us, ver. 11, 13. The prophetical Part of the Old Testament was also imperfect, as it is in the Nature of all Prophesies to have something more or less of Obscurity in their Composition: Agreeably hereunto Moses is represented as having a Veil over his Face, which by a beautiful Figure is designed to intimate the imperfect Light held forth in the Revelation by him, in Comparison of the Clearness and Brightness of the Discoveries made in the Gospel in respect to Spiritual Things; but now the Veil is removed by the coming of our Lord: And as there is a vast Difference in all Cases, whether Spiritual or Temporal, a great Difference betwixt seeing a Thing that is come, and only hearing that it is to come; and the

the Bulk of Mankind want to have Matters of a religious Nature laid down before them in the plainest and most copious Terms, there being but few, comparatively speaking, that are capable of making proper Inferences, and drawing right Conclusions from Principles that are briefly and somewhat obscurely delivered : These things considered, we may justly conclude, that the removal of Rites and Ceremonies, of Types and Figures, by the Coming of our Lord, and fulfilling all that was pre-figured and prophesied concerning him, must greatly contribute to the Increase of Light, Certainty, and Knowledge, with respect to the great Design for which our Lord was to make his Appearance in the World, and to perform, and teach, and undergo what he did, for the Procurement of the Remission of Sins, and the Salvation of Men.

Thus in many respects was the Coming of our Lord in the Flesh, even to the Jews themselves, a Means of communicating farther Degrees of Knowledge, as to the way of pleasing God, and obtaining an happy Immortality. But then as our Lord was prophesied of, as a *Light to enlighten the Gentiles* as well as to be the *Glory of his People Israel*, He was to give *Light to them that sat in Darkness, and in the Valley of the Shadow of Death*, and to guide the Feet of the Gentiles as well as the Jews, into the Way of Peace ; and here 'twill be to my Purpose to observe, that the favourite Maxim of your Book, and that which almost the whole of the argumentative Part of it is built upon, and connected with, is, That the Gospel of Christ contains no new Discovery with respect to Mens Obtainment of the Pardon of Sin, and the Method of procuring the Favour of God, and the Hopes of Happiness : That no Man ever did, or can receive any Benefit from our Blessed Lord, besides receiving the true Principles of Moral Conduct

duct from him, as being thereby directed to walk in the Ways that are well-pleasing in the Sight of God : That by Consequence we are no farther obliged to him for his Death and Sufferings, than as he thereby gave the fullest and most convincing Proof of the Truth of the Doctrines which he taught to Men, and of the Love which he bore to them, by which he was influenced to appear amongst them as an Instructor of the great Truths of Morality and Virtue, which had not been duly attended to, but Men had too generally departed from and neglected ; and that there was no other Benefit that Men could possibly receive from all that he did and suffer'd, besides that of his Instruction and Example.

These Instructions of his, or the Moral Precepts laid down by him, you every where insist upon, to be no other than the proper Language, the genuine Dictates of the Law of Nature, and that the whole of the Gospel of Christ consists in nothing but Instructions of this kind, and Exhortations to Mankind to repent of their Sins, and walk according to the Rules of Duty he laid before them ; but that all the while it lay in the Power of Men by a proper Exertion and Use of their natural Faculties, to attain the Knowledge of all those Moral Principles, of all those Rules of Life, and Means of Happiness.

That this is a just Representation of the Gospel of Christ as set forth by you, will appear to any one that will but with a moderate Degree of Attention peruse your Book. But as the Reader will expect to have some express Passages of yours pointed out, I shall refer him to a few out of abundance to the same Purpose. Thus, p. 104. you tell us, ‘ The Sum of the Gospel consists in the following Particulars.

‘ First, He (i. e. Christ) requires and recommends a Conformity of Mind and Life to the Eternal and Unalterable Rule of Action which is founded in the Reason of Things, and makes or declares that Compliance to be the only, and the sure Ground of Divine Acceptance, and the only, and the sure Way to Life Eternal.

II. ‘ If Men have lived in a Violation of this Righteous Law, by which they have rendered themselves displeasing to God, and worthy of his just Resentment, then Christ requires and recommends Repentance and Reformation of their Evil Ways as the only, and the sure Grounds of the Divine Mercy and Forgiveness. And,

III. ‘ Christ assures us that God has appointed a Time in which he will judge the World in Righteousness, and that he will then approve or condemn, reward or punish every Man according to his Works ; that is, according as he has, or has not conformed his Affections and Actions to that Rule of Action before-mentioned, and according as he has, or has not repented, and amended his Evil Ways.’

This is pretty near the same, Word for Word, as you had said, p. 18. and after a great deal to the same Purpose, you express yourself on this Subject, in a very plain and concise manner in p. 28. ‘ That by the Commandments Christ means the Moral Law, or that Rule of Action which is founded in the Reason of Things ; and which therefore every Rational Being ought to direct his Behaviour by, and whoever makes this Law the Measure of his Actions, such have Everlasting Life.’

Your Observation on the Answer which our Lord makes to the Lawyer, who asked him, What he should do to inherit Eternal Life, *Luke x. 25*, is also very full and express, agreeably to what has been before quoted. ‘ Here again (you say) we see Christ declared that the Way to Eternal Life, or that the True Ground of Divine Acceptance is to keep the Commandments, by loving God, and our Neighbour, which is nothing else but the conforming our Minds and Lives to that Rule of Action which is founded in the Reason of Things. Here you desire your Readers to observe, that this is Christ’s own Account of the matter; and therefore it may most surely be relied upon. And as the Questions which were put to him’ (meaning the Question of the Lawyer just mentioned, and that which was ask’d him by the Person of whom you have some Account, *Matt. xix.*) were (say you) ‘ of the highest Importance to Mankind, viz.. *What Men should do that they might obtain eternal Life?* And as he was sent into the World on purpose that he might be a safe Guide to Men in this very Affair, so, if he had not given a full and true Answer to those Questions, if he had not plainly declared all that was necessary for Men to know and do in order to obtain eternal Life, then he would not have been true to his Trust.’ p. 30.

In like manner (you say) with respect to the Question proposed by the other, *Matt. xix. 16*. *What good Thing shall I do, that I may inherit eternal Life?* ‘ This was a plain and a fair Question, a Question of the last Importance, and which called for a plain, a full, and a serious Answer, and which Christ was obliged, if he would answer his Character as a safe Guide to Life eternal, to answer accordingly.’ As to both these Questions, you are very positive that our

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Lord did, and was obliged to give plain, full, and serious Answers, they being both Questions of the same Import and Meaning, and Questions of the last Importance, even what Men should do that they might inherit eternal Life? And you are not only positive that they are plain and full Answers, but go a great deal further, and pass it as your definitive Sentence upon the Case, that they must necessarily be such, or else our Lord had forfeited his Character, as a safe Guide to Life eternal, and that without his so doing, he would not have been true to his Trust: But this (you add) is not to be supposed. Very true indeed, it ought not to be supposed. 'And therefore (you conclude) ' we may depend upon it, the keeping the Commandments, or the governing our Minds and Lives by that Rule of Action, which is founded ' on the Reason of Things, will most certainly ' render us pleasing and acceptable to God, and ' secure to us the Happiness of another World.'

p. 30.

I am sorry that this Supposition of the Possibility of our Lord's not acting up to the Sincerity of his Character upon this Occasion, should drop from your Pen; because, I am not only well satisfy'd that it is a very great Mistake in you to conceive, that our Lord designed in these two Places to give a full and plain Answer; that is, such an one as therein to declare, all that was necessary for Men to know and do in order to eternal Life; that it is very plain our Lord did not think either of the Persons that made these Questions, to be deserving of such Answers from him. As to the Answer to the first Enquirer, it comprehends no more of what it was necessary for a Man to know and do in order to obtain eternal Life, than the Duties contained in the Commandments of the second Table. Now, I am sure you will

grant, that the Duties required by the Commandments of the first Table, are as necessary to be practised in order to Salvation, as those of the Second. They are not in Reality capable of being separated from each other, neither can any Man perform a sincere Obedience in his Behaviour towards Man, unless he be under the Influence of an unfeigned Love to God, and a spiritual Reverence of his Infinite Attributes and Perfections : But the Reason of our Lord's only mentioning the Commands of the second Table to this Person, seems to have been, that, *as he knew what was in Man*, this Person was one that was fill'd with spiritual Pride, on account of the Exactness of his Conduct towards his fellow Mortals : His Conscience did not prick him for any direct or notorious Violation of the Rules of Justice and Equity betwixt Man and Man : He had performed his Promises, and made good his Engagements he had entered into in the Offices of Business and Commerce, and being buoyed up with certain Self-sufficiency, and an Idea of his own Merit, took this Opportunity to boast of his own Excellency, and the Perfectnes of his Conduct, a way of thinking frequently to be met with in the present Age; it being the most common Encomium passed at Funerals, or upon hearing of the Death of a Friend, to say of him, He was a very honest Man; he paid every one he had Dealings with, with a great deal of Honour; he is gone to Heaven before. Upon the same Grounds this Enquirer of our Lord built a confident Dependance, that he was assur'd of Heaven and Happiness if he continued in the same Course: But upon the Man's making a vainglorious Answer, ver. 20.  
*All these Things have I kept from my Youth up: what lack I yet?* Our Lord to his great Mortification made him the following Reply: *If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the*

*the Poor, and thou shalt have Treasure in Heaven: and come and follow me,* ver. 21. In this Answer of our Lord's, not only the Person boasting of the Perfection of his Conduct is censured, by an implicit Accusation laid to his Charge, of having *with-held more than was meet* of the Substance which God in his Providence had plentifully bestowed upon him, and not contributing to the Relief and Assistance of his necessitous Brethren, the Indigence of whose Circumstances pleaded for Help and Comfort: And from the Account of his Conduct, which immediately follows, it is manifest that he was criminally defective in the Temper and Disposition of his Mind, and by no means in such a Preparedness for Heaven as he had dream'd of, and was vainly puffed up upon. *But when the young Man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great Possessions,* ver. 22. Tho' he was free from the Charge of direct Injustice as to the Properties of other Men, yet he was defective in his Stewardship under the Great Lord and Proprietor of all; and now when required to testify his Submission to the Dictates of the Divine Will, in disposing of the earthly Substance entrusted in his Hands, he shrunk from what he was commanded, and refused to comply therewith: He appears destitute of that Submission to the Will of God, and that fiducial Reliance, which every good Man ought to place on his Protection, Provision, and Reward. As to the Case of the Lawyer, which you cite from *Luke x. 25.* the same Observation is applicable to him, as to the other, that our Lord was not obliged to give him such a full and copious Answer, as you insist upon he was by the most solemn Engagements, even those of a Regard to the Truth and Sincerity of his Character and Office. The Lawyer was not entitled from his Spirit and Temper of Soul to such an Answer, as you insist upon

upon that this was and ought to be, he not bringing with him that docible and humble Spirit, which it was his indispensable Duty to have come with, his only View being not to receive Information in the great Concern of his obtaining Salvation and Happiness, but to insult and expose him. *A certain Lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit Eternal Life?* Our Lord answers this captious Querist by putting another Question to him, as he did upon other Occasions, when he was attack'd by the Interrogatories of Evil-minded Men. *He said unto him, What is written in the Law? how readest thou?* To this the other answers, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength, and with all thy Mind, and thy Neighbour as thy self, ver. 27.* Our Lord replies, *Thou hast answered well, this do and thou shalt live; but he willing to justify himself said unto Jesus, and who is my Neighbour?* Our Saviour answered him in the Parable of the good *Samaritan*, wherein he gives the Preference, as to the Characterstick of a Neighbour to the *Samaritan*, in opposition to a Priest and a *Levite*; the Humanity and pious Benevolence of the *Samaritan*, flowing from a Principle of Love to God and Man, is the just Foundation of our Saviour's representing him as an Example of Piety and Goodness, and of condemning the irreligious Uncharitableness and want of Compassion in the Priest and *Levite*, who ought to have been peculiar Patterns of it. This was a most cutting Reprimand to this Self-opinionated Doctor of the Law, who was full of that bigoted Narrowness of Soul, which it was the Character of the Devotees of that Age and Nation to be possessed with: They interpreted all the good Offices that are due to our Fellow Mortals, under the Notion of Neighbours, to be due only to

to those of their own Nation and Religion ; and they even gloried in a barbarous Uncharitableness and Hatred towards others, and especially the *Samaritans*. This exactly corresponds with that short and full Character of the *Jews*, by *Tacitus* ; *Apud ipsos fides Obstinata, Misericordia in promptu, Sed adversus omnes alios Hostile Odium.*

But, Sir, as I am willing to make you every Concession I possibly can, allowing that the whole of what is necessary to be observ'd in order to Salvation, be comprised in these few Sentences ; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength, and with all thy Mind, and thy Neighbour as thy self*, as undoubtedly, in strictness of Speaking, it is ; and our Lord expressly says hereupon, *This do and thou shalt live*. Yet what Advantage will you make, or what Explanation will you give of it, so as to render it of any Service to your Cause and Argument ? You will say perhaps, as you do innumerable Times, sometimes in a more concise, sometimes in a more diffused manner, that the Gospel requires no more than a Compliance with the Dictates of the Law of Nature, and that those Moral Principles which are deducible from the Consideration of the Divine Attributes, and a proper Exercise of the rational Faculties bestowed on us by our Creator, are in themselves sufficient to direct us to the Practice of Holiness, and the Procurement of Happiness : Admitting this to be true, what will follow from this Concession ? Why no more nor less than this, That a compleat Obedience to the Precepts of Morality and Virtue, which have their Foundation in the eternal and unalterable Law of Nature and Reason, would entitle the Observers of them to the Favour of God, and the Possession of Felicity. And what are any of your fellow Mortals obliged to you for insisting on this Doctrine ?

Doctrine? We allow it to be true; but pray, Sir, what Advantage is to be derived from it for the Promotion of the common Salvation and Happiness? Our Saviour, I grant you, in the Bulk of the Revelation which he has given us, has taught the same Doctrine; as it is impossible for God to lie, it is not possible but that his Son, who came in his Name to teach the *Way of Truth and Peace*, must deliver such doctrinal Instructions as had their Foundation in the essential Rectitude of Things, and which have in their innate Composition and Structure, an immutable Beauty, Fitness and Excellency; and accordingly he delivers these his Precepts, not as the Effects of mere superior Power and sovereign Authority, but as in themselves fit and proper, as being conducive in their own Nature, and in their direct Consequences to be productive of present Self-enjoyment and future Bliss. But then, Sir, though we have an entire System of Moral Goodness laid down in the New Testament, and thrown into a Variety of Shapes, that we might have *Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept*; that in the different Lights in which Piety and Virtue are placed, the various Capacities of Men might be provided with suitable Means of being informed and enlightened: Yet still, if we are not in a Capacity, according to the present Circumstances and Constitution of the Human Nature, to perform an adequate Obedience to the Dictates of this Moral Law, and to comply with the Requirements of this perfect Rule for the Conduct of Rational Beings, and as nothing but such a perfect unerring Obedience can give us a Title to Future Blessedness, of what Benefit would it have been to Mankind to have had the Precepts of this Eternal Law ever so particularly laid before them, or ever so minutely and clearly expounded to them, when at the same time they were all conscious to

to themselves of having fallen short of an exact Observation of its Precepts; and, if they thought soberly, must be sensible it was not possible for them to perform an exact Obedience to it for the future? And supposing that the Prophet employ'd by God in this Work, should declare to Men, that their past Violations of this sacred Law were entirely forgiven, yet, as universal Experience made it certain that they should not be able in time to come to comport themselves in such a manner as that their Actions should square with the Rules enjoined by it, Wherein would their Condition be bettered hereby? Thus, when the Doctor of the Law came with his ensnaring Question, *What shall I do to inherit eternal Life?* And our Lord told him, that according to his own Definition of the Moral Law, if he performed an Obedience to it, he should not fail of attaining that eternal Life which he was enquiring how he might inherit. *This do, and thou shalt live.* And when he put that further Question, *Who is my Neighbour?* Upon our Lord's explaining to him the true Notion of a Neighbour, he found himself sadly baulk'd in his Imagination of the Perfectness of his Conduct, being tacitly reproved in the Parable of the *Samaritan* for his past Ignorance and Uncharitableness. He having proposed this Question to *justify himself*, or to have an Opportunity of glorying in the Unblameableness of his Behaviour, but was disappointed herein, and struck into Silence and Confusion upon a Conviction of his Error. What Consolation could he then derive from his being told, That if his Obedience to the Moral Law were perfect, it would render him happy; when it was most evident, that he had no Claim of that kind to make to Happiness?

From what has been said, it may, I think, be justly inferred, that the *True Gospel* contains some-

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thing more in it besides the Doctrines or Precepts of the Moral Law, in order to intitle it to the Name of *Gospel*, or *Glad Tydings*; forasmuch as if it contained nothing in it but a Specification or Declaration of the Principles of Morality and Virtue, it would be so far from deserving to be called the *Gospel*, or *Glad Tydings* to Men, that it would be no other than an absolute Sentence of Condemnation pronounced on all Mankind.

In all Men that are in any measure enlightened with right Sentiments of the Duties incumbent on them by the Law of Nature, there must of course be a Consciousness of innumerable Sins of Omission and Commission against the Rules prescribed thereby; and as it is a perfect Obedience alone that gives a Title to Happiness, so, if a Man fall short of such a Conduct, he can have no Grounds of being justified and made happy in Consequence of his own Behaviour. *This do, and thou shalt live*, is the proper, the natural Language of the Moral Law; but it is a Language which imparts no hope of Comfort to the Children of Men; because, if there be no other Method discoverable, by means whereof they may entertain the Prospect of being justified in the Sight of God, and attaining to eternal Life, their State is most deplorable.

Here I shall take the Liberty to confirm what I have said on this Head, by the Testimony of St. Paul to the same Purpose, and I can do it with the better Grace in reasoning with you, because you have not cut me off from this Assistance, not having set it down as one of his *private Opinions*; so that till you have entered your Protest against it on that Score, I may very decently call it in to my Aid, and it is a most direct and material Passage to my Purpose. *For as many as are of the Works of the Law, are under the Curse: For it is written, Cursed*

*Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things which are written in the Book of the Law, to do them. But that no Man is justified by the Law in the Sight of God, it is evident : for, The Just shall live by Faith. And the Law is not of Faith : but The Man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse (or the Condemnation) of the Law, being made a Curse for us. That the Blessings of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.* Gal. iii. 10. &c.

Now herein consisteth the very Essence of the True Gospel of Jesus Christ, or the Gospel of Glad Tydings, in communicating to Mortals the full and explicit Knowledge of the Way of Salvation thro' a Redeemer, who without the imparting of such Knowledge to them, could not acquire it by any other Medium of Conveyance ; all the Knowledge of obtaining Happiness that resulted from the Moral Law being only this, that upon a Perfection of Obedience it was attainable, and by no other Means. If therefore Justification in the Sight of God be not attainable by any Obedience we are capable of performing to the Precepts of the Moral Law, and it is the positive, the repeated Doctrine and Language of the New Testament, that we are to hope for Salvation by Virtue of Faith in Christ, as our Redeemer and Mediator betwixt God and Man ; if our Salvation be of Grace or Favour, and not of Merit, according to that of St. Paul, Gal. ii. 20, 21, *And the Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the Grace of God : for if Righteousness came by the Law, then is Christ dead in vain.* From hence it manifestly follows, that, to insist upon it, that the Gospel by Jesus Christ is no other than a Republication of the Law of Nature, or merely a setting it forth in its just

Extent, is in fact to explain it away, and to divest it of all its Glory and Consolation, as *the Gospel* or a Message of Glad Tydings to Men, and to turn it into a Message of Heavy Tydings; as that of a Sentence of Condemnation must always be supposed to be.

I am very ready to allow, what you so strenuously and repeatedly urge, that a general Apprehension of the Duties that are owing from Men to God, and to one another, is attainable, by the Notices which God hath given in his Works, and in his Providence, and by a sincere and studious Exercise of the Faculties implanted in us by our Creator. But then, Who is the Man, where is the Person, that can say with Truth he has not been deficient either in the Seriousness or in the Diligence with which he ought to have set about this great Work? Or who will be so bold as to affirm, that he has never wilfully departed from the Rules of Righteousness, or negligently failed of performing Obedience to some or other of them? A Man that has never deviated from the perfect Way, that has never failed of acting in Imitation of the All-perfect Being, has without Dispute a Right to the Expectation and Possession of Happiness. An All-perfect God cannot but be delighted with his own Likeness; and by Consequence, the Man of perfect Obedience cannot but be happy, in the Enjoyment of the Light of his Heavenly Father's Countenance: But as Sin and Disobedience are the Cause of the Alienation of the Divine Favour, and render the Transgressor obnoxious to his Wrath and Displeasure, The Grand Question arising from hence, is, How, or by what Means, an offending Creature shall be reinstated into the Favour of that God, against whom he is conscious he has been an Offender? That *there is no Man that liveth upon Earth and sinneth not*, is not only an Assertion of Holy Writ,

Writ, but what your self also will not deny your Assent to : It will therefore be incumbent upon you either to give up your whole Scheme, or to point out some Method or other, which is practicable from the Light of unassisted Reason, whereby to discover a Method of obtaining the Pardon of Sin, and of rendering God propitious to Man, who has offended against him, and finds his Conscience burdened with the Guilt of Sin.

All that it is possible for a Man to do under these Circumstances, is to be heartily sorrowful for the Sins he has committed, and to form sincere Resolutions of amending his Errors for the future : But the bitterest Grief, the deepest Contrition for past Offences, can never alter the Nature of Things ; it can never make that to be no Transgression, which is confessed to have been one ; neither can the most unfeigned and successful Endeavours to avoid the same Errors in Conduct for time to come, ever annihilate the Facts that have already been. The utmost that a good and virtuous Action can operate, is to stand upon its own Bottom, and to be in itself defensible and good ; there can therefore be no superabundant Merit in a future Good Action, to make Atonement for the Sinfulness and Obliquity of a past Evil one ; to suppose that, would be in another Shape to teach the Doctrine of Supererogation, which you have a sufficient Aversion to in the *Romish* Church, and therefore will never adopt into your own Scheme.

Upon this State of Things then, the Doctrine of a Mediator and Redeemer must appear to be the most grateful News to sinful offending Mortals, as *Life from the Dead*, as a Means to compose the afflicted, helpless, and desponding Soul, and to purify the Conscience from the Guilt and Defilement of *Dead Works*.

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Were it consistent with the Limits I would assign my self, I might here make many Quotations from the ancient Heathen Philosophers, wherein their Uncertainty and Doubt with respect to the Enjoyment of a future State of Happiness is expressed, and the Need they stood in of some supernatural Light and Information, to let them into the Knowledge of what was above all things else to be desired, on what Grounds to build a solid Foundation of Hope towards God, and an Expectation of a State of future Felicity: But as I am not under any Necessity of producing their Evidence in the Case before us, and as that Proneness to transgress the Rules of Virtue, which they lamented in Mankind in general, is what is denied by none in the present Age, there needs no other Evidence, in an Affair which is universally acknowledged; neither am I obliged to dispute the Point of the Condition in which our First Parents were created, inasmuch as it is an allowed Fact, whether they were created with more perfect Faculties than their Descendants or not, that we are incapable of laying a Claim to Happiness from the Perfection and Spotlessness of our Behaviour.

Nothing therefore could communicate to Mankind, consider'd in such a Situation, having a consciousness of Guilt, and being of themselves incapable of retrieving the Errors which they had fallen into, a Relief from those Apprehensions that must arise from a Sense of their being Offenders, a Relief adequate to the disconsolate Circumstances which they were in, but some Message, some Revelation from Heaven, whereby they might be instructed in what Manner the infinitely pure and Holy Being against whom they had offended might be appeased, and the Guilt of their Offences done away. This was done in Part by the Prophecies that foretold the coming of a Redeemer, who

who was to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to bring in everlasting Righteousness. Dan. ix. 24. 'Twas on a View to, and a Belief of the Completion of these gracious Promises, that the ancient Patriarchs and the People of God under the Mosaick Dispensation rested, on this they depended for Salvation. *These all died in Faith, not having received the Promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth.* Heb. xi. 13. In Imitation of Abram, who, by the Impulse of a lively Faith in God, and a firm Reliance on the Performative of his Promises, looked upon the dearest Enjoyments in life as not to be regarded, when called upon to resign them by that God from whom he had received them: They considered themselves as but Strangers and Pilgrims here on Earth, expected not their Happiness here, but looked forward to a better, an heavenly Country, an Entrance into which was to be opened by the Messiah to come, the great Object and Foundation of their Faith and Hope. *In the fullness of Time* our Lord made his Appearance amongst Men, according to the Prophecies that had promised his coming; and as by the Promises made of him from the Beginning, that *the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's Head*; that *in him all the Families of the Earth should be blessed*; that he should be *the Sun of Righteousness* that should arise with *Healing under his Wings*, and that he should be *for the Healing of the Nations*: As it was thus promised, that he should be a general Remedy and Blessing to the World, accordingly, when he had taken upon him his publick Ministry, and had been abundantly proved to be *the Sent of God*, according to the universally prevailing Expectation of the Nation of whom he descended

descended according to the Flesh, and that of all the Nations which we have any Histories of besides; having confirmed his Divine Authorities by his Miracles as well as by his Doctrine, he chose out a certain select Number whom he kept always about his Person, and to whom he gradually communicated what he was, and what was the great Intention of his coming amongst Men, even to procure for them the Pardon of Sins, and to purchase for them *an everlasting Inheritance*; having further promised them, that tho' in a little Time he should be taken from them *and go to the Father*, yet they should be supplied with the Presence and Assistance of the *Comforter*, the *Spirit of Truth*, who should lead them *into all Truth*, and that they should be sent into all Nations in further prosecution of the great and gracious Design of promoting the Salvation of their fellow Mortals, and of propagating the *Gospel of Glad Tydings*; to assure Mankind of God's being reconcileable thro' his Son, and that by Faith in his Blood, by Repentance for their Sins, and a sincere tho' imperfect Obedience, the Way *into the Holiest* was *laid open*. He willingly reign'd this Life as a Sacrifice and a Propitiation, rose again from the Dead, ascended up into Heaven in the most glorious Pomp, and in a very publick manner, and according to his Promise, his Apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost, enabled to speak in Tongues they were before unacquainted with, and to perform the greatest and most convincing Miracles as an Attestation of their being really invested with the Character which they assumed, and in Consequence of all this, they with the greatest Industry and indefatigable Zeal, dispers'd themselves amongst the various Nations, and proceeded on the same Plan which our Lord had marked out for them: In their Preaching and in their Writings they

they harmonized with each other, teaching the Doctrine of their and our common Lord and Redeemer: No Menaces, no Sufferings, no Difficulties or Torments were capable of discouraging them from persisting in the Work which they had undertaken, and thus they went on till they had finish'd their glorious Course, and given the most solemn and most convictive Evidences of the Truth of what they preached, and what they knew and believed.

Now, Sir, supposing that God has not been pleased to impart to us the highest, and perhaps the essential Measure of Fitness there was in the Reason of Things, or the Moral Necessity there was that this, and this only Scheme or Method should take Place, for the purchasing of Peace, for *the Remission of Sins*, and the Procurement of Salvation and Happiness for Men. Yet it will be sufficient if our Lord himself says it was necessary, *that thus it should be*, and if we are able to assign very great and important Reasons, for which there was a peculiar Fitness in this transcendently gracious and wonderful Transaction for the Accomplishing of the great Ends proposed by it, such as the Procurement of the Pardon of Sin, the Repairing the Honour of the Divine Laws, and securing the Eternal Happiness of all, that in all Periods of Time should be the proper Objects thereof. This certainly should afford us abundant Cause of Admiration and Gratitude.

If the Gospel of Christ consisted in nothing more than you would have it to consist of, it is not possible for any Man ever to attain to Happiness at all; for according to you, our Lord did no more than represent to and press upon Men a Conformity of Mind and Life, to that Eternal Law or Rule of Action which is founded in the Reason of Things, as the only Ground of the Divine Acceptance,

tance. pag. 38, and 40. He shall approve or condemn, reward or punish every Man, as he has or has not conformed his Affections and Actions to that Righteous Law which is founded in the Reason of Things. According to this Rule of Proceeding, as I have already shewn you, there is Hope nor Happiness for none. It must be owned indeed, you say, in pag. 38. That Christ recommended to and pressed upon Sinners, Repentance and Reformation of their Evil Ways, as the only Ground of the Divine Mercy and Forgiveness; and in the same manner you talk in other Places: But not to insist upon the Contradiction there is in these different ways of talking, it is not possible for a Sinner to know that his Penitence and Contrition will be accepted; for the Sake of itself it never can, neither can an Age of Sorrow attone for or make any Alteration in a foregoing Act of Iniquity and Disobedience.

That it was congruous to the Infinite Goodness and Excellency of the Divine Being, to have Compassion on the Work of his Hands, and to make a Discovery of some Method or other that should be suitable to his own Dignity, as well as to the Necessities and Miseries of Men, is what must be allowed by every reasonable Man. Our Lord Jesus has undertaken the Office of Mediator betwixt God and Men, *Salvation* is declared to be in his Name and in no other. This Method of proclaiming Hopes to Men, is said to be the Power and the Wisdom of God unto Salvation. Our Lord himself declared in the plainest Manner, that the great Work of procuring the Salvation of Men could not be effectuated but by his Death and Sufferings. The Apostles, one and all, assert the same in the strongest Terms, as the fundamental Doctrine of the Gospel; both they and our Lord expatiate upon it as an Effect of the unspeakable Love

Love of God and Christ, and without the taking Place of this Gracious Scheme, the Salvation of Mankind is upon the whole represented as not attainable.

The Points of Doctrine which are inferr'd from hence by our Lord and his Apostles after him, are such as these, *That Sin is exceeding sinful*, that without the Commencement of this Covenant betwixt the Father and the Son, by virtue whereof the Son or *Logos* undertook to become an *Offering for Sin*, it was not to be purged away by the Blood of *Bulls nor of Goats*, nor by the most costly Sacrifices and Oblations; that if this of our Lord be despised, *there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sin*; that this Love of God and of Christ is incomparably more excellent than any Love that Mortals can possibly shew each other: This is built upon the unspeakable Superiority and Excellency of Christ, who became a *Sacrifice for us*; and as Men considered as Sinners, are *Enemies to God*, and alienated from him by *wicked Works*: On this Circumstance is grounded the Doctrine of *Loving our Enemies*, and of returning *Good for Evil*, in Opposition to what was taught by some of the most celebrated Heathen Writers, that Revenge was a Virtue; and to say no more on this Head, all the Sacrifices and Offerings of Beasts under the Mosaick Oeconomy, are declared to have a typical Reference to this single and perfect Expiation of our Lord and Redeemer.

In direct Contradiction to all this, you say, *As to that Doctrine, viz. That Christ bath by his Sufferings and Death made Satisfaction to God for the Sins of the World, and thereby merited the Sinners Discharge from Condemnation. This Doctrine Christ did not preach, and therefore it cannot be any Part of his Gospel, but it is directly opposite to it, and tends to subvert it*, pag. 36. To the same Purpose

pag. 118. It is very absurd, and a shameful Affront to the Majesty of Heaven, to suppose that God removes his Displeasure and takes into Favour one Agent, for what was personally pleasing in another, because this supposes him to act upon wrong and false Principles. The Right Behaviour and the Sufferings of Christ have no more Connexion with, nor Relation to another Person, so as to be a Ground or Reason for God to shew Favour or Kindness to that other Person, than Colour has to Sound, &c. What you here say is deliver'd with a Confidence which I must needs say is shocking, in that the Doctrine you here oppose, and even ridicule, is the Tenour of the New Testament; and to say that Christ did not preach the Doctrine of Satisfaction for Sin, by virtue of Faith in the Sufficiency of the Sacrifice offered in and by himself, in conjunction with sincere Endeavours to copy after the Example of his Life, as the Way to Eternal Life, is equivalent to the Denial of the whole Christian Revelation, and you must either first prove that the Writings of the Apostles are not the Dictates of Inspiration, or else your whole Fabrick must fall to the Ground. This is what you will never be able to perform, without overthrowing the concurrent Testimonies of all the Ages since our Saviour's Days down to our present Times. As to the Books of Canonical Scripture, it must be owned there has been some small Part of the Canon that has been controverted amongst Christians, but that controverted Part was but small in comparison of the whole, and has been of a long Time settled and acknowledged; so that in order to establish your Scheme as to the Terms of Acceptance with God, viz. Nothing more than *Repentance and Reformation*, it will be necessary for you to carry your Notion of the *Private Opinions* of the Apostles to a most amazing Extent, even to expunge the whole Substance

Substance of the New Testament; for when you shall have carefully consider'd all the Passages of the Evangelists and the Epistles, you will find that either directly or consequentially, either positively or by Allusion, if all the Texts are excluded that either tacitly imply or expressly assert the Doctrines of the Divine Nature of our Lord, and his Death's being a Sacrifice and Attонement by Faith, in which Sinners are to hope for Pardon and Happiness, the New Testament will be reduced to a meer Skeleton, or rather to nothing; so far is that from being *the True Gospel of Jesus Christ*, which you would have to be received as such, 'as the reforming the World, and rightly directing and governing the Minds and Lives of Men, was the only possible Way in which Christ could be a Saviour to them, so this was the only Way in which he proposed to be their Saviour, and this was the only Method he pursued in order to attain that End. He tells Sinners plainly, that except they repent they will all perish, and that the true and only Way to Life Eternal is, to keep the Commandments, and that if they do this, they shall live, and the like. This is the True Gospel of Jesus Christ: As to the Saving Man-kind by the imputed Righteousness, or the meritorious Sufferings, or the prevailing Intercession of Christ, these are Doctrines which Christ never taught, and are what Christ never pretended to save Man by, but were Methods of Salvation set up by Men, who called themselves *bis Followers*; and these Methods of saving Man-kind, as they are of human Invention, and are no Part of the Gospel of Christ, so they naturally tend to subvert it. p. 119, 120.' In p. 142, you add to what you had said before, with your usual Air of Authority, that *The Doctrines of the imputed Righteousness, the meritorious Sufferings, and the*

the prevailing Intercession of Christ being either separately or conjunctly the Grounds of Man's Acceptance with God, and of Sinners obtaining Divine Mercy. These Doctrines do naturally tend to weaken and take off the persuasive Influence of the Gospel, and so render it of none Effect, as by them is pointed out to Man another Way to God's Favour and Mercy, and another Way to Life Eternal than the Gospel has pointed out unto them, and consequently the aforesaid Doctrines render the Doctrine of the Gospel an useless and insignificant Thing.

Now, Sir, if it be certain that these Doctrines which we insist upon to be a Part of the Gospel of Christ, and, indeed, the very Essence of it, have no manner of Tendency to enervate the Force of any of the Moral Precepts, or to excuse Men in the least from an Obligation to the Practice of all the Acts of personal Piety and Virtue. If, notwithstanding, the Doctrines beforementioned are asserted and taught in the Gospel of Christ, and are in reality the whole Tenour, Sum, and Substance of what is, and ought in all Propriety to be called *the Gospel*, there can be no manner of Danger arise from hence, since Men are as much required as ever to serve God in Holiness and Righteousness, and are told, they are to expect no manner of Favour at the last Day in consequence of their professing to be the Disciples of Christ, unless they sincerely endeavour to lead Lives conformable to the Holiness and Purity of the Moral Precepts. *Without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord.* It will avail nothing to talk of the Perversions of the Design of a Saviour's coming into the World: The best Institutions are liable to be corrupted, the greatest Instances of Divine Mercy to be perverted, even the Grace of God is liable to be turned into Wantonness. I am willing you should be as severe as you please upon the Antinomians and Fatalists,

Fatalists ; unquestionably those that hold that all things are eternally fixed by a predeterminate, unalterable Appointment, advance Opinions that naturally tend to introduce all manner of Impiety and Wickedness of Life ; but then, don't be so cruel as to charge all that don't jump with you in Judgment as *Antinomians*, but entertain so much Charity as to think, that a Man may believe the Doctrines of the imputed Righteousness, the meritorious Sufferings, and the prevailing Intercession of Christ, without having their Sentiments of the Obligation of Moral Virtue impaired in the least : There is no manner of Connexion betwixt the one and the other, and it is doing no slight Dis-honour to the Gospel and the Author of it, to make the least Insinuation as tho' there were any Danger of such a Consequence to flow from it.

Your Reasoning on this Subject is altogether weak and inconclusive. For if Persons can be prevailed upon to believe, that Men are rendered acceptable to God, and that Sinners are recommended to the Divine Mercy, not on account of their being in themselves the suitable and proper Objects of either, but only on the account of the right Behaviour, the Sufferings and the Intercession of Christ ; then the Consequence is clear, that to Persons so persuaded, there cannot appear any Necessity for them to become personally valuable in themselves by a right Behaviour, and by Repentance and Reformation of their Evil Ways. p. 142. Now, as Christians, at least Protestants in general do hold no such Consequences, but are entirely in the Belief of the Obligation of Moral Virtues, according to Man's best Capacities and Endeavours : The Consequence which you take so much Pains to infer, is no other than an Invention and an Imagination of your own, without any Foundation ; and consequently, the Gospel Scheme of a Mediator and Redeemer,

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and of Pardon and Happiness, being attainable through the Merit and Efficacy of his Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and sitting as Intercessor on the *Right Hand of God*, tho' violently attack'd by your bold Assertions and Surmises, remains entire and unprejudiced, and stands established upon the concurrent Testimony of our Lord and his Apostles; and you might well have spared those ungenerous and groundless Reflections on those that preach these Doctrines as the Sum and Substance of the Gospel of Christ, as *Preachers of another Gospel*; as *Deceivers in Points of the greatest Importance*; as *Antichrists and Betrayers of Mens Souls.* p. 145. If your Scheme be right, there will be some Pretence for loading them with such opprobrious Language; if false, to whom will these Invectives belong?

I shall take Notice of one Passage more to the same Effect in p. 153. ‘ I am also sensible, it is pretended, that God could not, consistent with the Ends of Government, pardon Sinners without shewing his Dislike of Sin, and that God’s Dislike of Sin was shewed by the Sufferings and Death of Christ; upon which I observe, that if God had singled out some one or more of the vilest of our Species, and had laid some heavy Afflictions upon them, and had done it in such a Way, that it had appeared plainly to all to be his Hand, and that it was laid upon them as a Punishment for their Sins, then there would have been some Pretence for this Argument, because, then it would have appeared that they were punished by God on the account of their Sins, and consequently they would have been standing Monuments of God’s Dislike of Sin.’ Now, what is it, I beseech you, that you are here aiming at? Does not Scripture History inform us, both in the Old and New Testament, of

of Instances enough of such as were singled out by God in his Providence, and made standing Monuments of God's dislike of Sin? Were not Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot's Wife, King Pharaoh, Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, and those that adhered to them; Ananias and Sapphira, King Herod, and Elymas the Sorcerer; were not all these Monuments sufficient to proclaim to Men God's Abhorrence of Iniquity and obstinate Impiety? And is there any Need, after these and other-like publick Instances of God's Displeasure against Sin, of any more Instances, merely to shew God's Dislike of Sin, or can you conceive of or describe any more publick or more effectual Method of this kind, whereby to answer that End better than these? And are not such Instances as these left on Record in Scripture, to serve as Examples to all succeeding Ages? Are not these quoted by the inspired Penmen, as Instances to the Purpose you are speaking of, in a Variety of Places? And is not what St. Paul says on the Head of some of these Cases, applicable in general to them all? Now all these Things happened unto them for Examples, and they are written for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the World are come. Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. 1 Cor. x. 11, 12. But (say you) when the most innocent and virtuous of all our Species was singled out to bear the most heavy Afflictions, and when such Afflictions were laid upon him, not by the Hand of God, but by the wicked Jews and Romans, and that too, not for his having done Evil but Good, which is the present Case. This surely could not shew God's Dislike to Sin. p. 154. Your way of arguing here is very partial, and of no manner of Force, but upon Supposition, that the Only End of our Lord's Sufferings and Death, was to shew God's Dis-  
pleasure

pleasure against Sin, and it must be owned to have been somewhat unaccountable, for God to have suffered a remarkably *virtuous and innocent Person* to fall under such Calamities, as none but the most vicious and ungodly deserved. Such a Case as this would be so far from answering the End proposed, as that it would be rather an Encouragement to wicked Men to persist in a Course of Wickedness. As to your Distinction betwixt the Hand of God and the Hands of the wicked *Jews* and *Romans*, it is wholly impertinent; because, any Calamity or Punishment that falls upon any Person or People, is to be regarded as equally the Hand of God, whether the Evil is inflicted by the more immediate Operation of divine Providence, as by Earthquakes, Inundations, Meteors, Tempest, or the like; or, more remotely, by the Invasion of Enemies, or the unjust Behaviour of our Countrymen; and whatever Cruelty or Wickedness is committed, is no way to be charged on the Great Governor of the World, because, whatever Hardships may befall particular Persons in such Occurrences, it is both in the Power and in the Will of the Supreme Ruler abundantly to make Compensation to those on whom Misfortunes come. Thus did God punish the Inhabitants of *Canaan* when their *Iniquities* came to be full, by the Children of *Israel*, and afterwards the *Israelites*, by the *Philistines* and others, and King *Nebuchadnezzar* is called his *Servant*, and the *Rod of his Anger*: And with Respect to this great Event of the Afflictions and Death which our Lord sustained from the Cruelty and Wickedness of the *Jews*; *Him being delivered by the determinate Counsel and Fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked Hands have crucified and slain.* *Acts ii. 23.* Thus again, *Acts iv. 27.* *For of a Truth against thy holy Child Jesus whom thou hast anointed,*

*anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, and the Gentiles and People of Israel were gathered together for so to do whatsoever thy Hand and thy Counsel determined before to be done. You see here it is said to be done by the Hand of God, as well as by the Jews. Neither is there any Difficulty in reconciling both these Ways of Expression, because, as nothing can be done in Opposition to the Will and Power of God, as nothing that is transacted in any Part of the Creation can be done without the divine Permission; in this Sense it may be said to come to pass by the Hand of God.*

I cannot but be surprised at your representing our Lord's Death and Sufferings to have been apprehended by any, or by the Body of Christians in general, as only design'd to shew God's *Dislike to Sin*, as you express it. This is one End, and a great one unquestionably; but if that had been all that was intended by it, it would never have been reconcileable with the Holiness, Justice, and Goodness of God. One would think, you don't want to be informed, that this is not assigned as a Reason for our Lord's Sufferings and Death by itself alone, but in Conjunction with other Ends and Reasons which expressly suppose and assert, that it was altogether unfit that our Lord should have suffered at all on his own Account, or in his own Person, distinctly consider'd. You know, Sir, it is declared to have come to pass in Consequence of an antecedent Compact, whereby, on the Part of the Son, it was co-nvenanted, that he would undergo these Afflictions and Sufferings on Behalf of Men, of Sinners, of Transgressors, and on the Part of the Father, that as a Recompence hereof, he should become the Author of Eternal Salvation to all that should believe and obey him. This is most fully and

emphatically described in the liii. Chap. of Isaiab.  
*Surely, he bath born our Griefs, and carried our Sorrows; Yet we esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities: The Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed. All we like Sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own Way, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his Mouth: He is brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his Mouth. He was taken from Prison and from Judgment; and who shall declare his Generation? For he was cut off out of the Land of the Living; for the Transgression of my People was he striken.* — *Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, he bath put him to Grief; when thou shalt make his Soul an Offering for Sin, he shall see his Seed.* — *He shall see of the Travail of his Soul, and shall be satisfied; by his Knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many; for he shall bear their Iniquities: Therefore will I divide him a Portion with the Great, and he shall divide the Spoil with the Strong; because he bath poured out his Soul unto Death, and he was numbered with the Transgressors, and he bare the Sin of many, and made Intercession for the Transgressors.* As Christ our Redeemer was perfectly pure and innocent in himself, he could by no means be punished on his own Account; but then this his absolute Purity, together with the Dignity of his Nature, qualified him to be a worthy and competent Mediator, and his Sacrifice to be a meritorious Propitiation.

That this was necessary for the Opening a new and living Way to the Obtainment of Bliss and Immortality for Men, is a Conclusion which not only follows from this, which I conceive to be

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an Argument of the highest Force and Conviction, that had it not upon the whole been fitting and requisite to answer the compleat System of the Divine Government over the World, it would never have taken Place. God himself being the only proper, the only qualified Judge of what is expedient and necessary, for vindicating the Honour of his Holy Laws, and for repairing the Breaches made by Sin betwixt himself and his Creatures: But our Lord in his Prayer just before his Passion, *O my Father, if it be possible, let this Cup pass from me;* as well as by what he afterward said, *But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?* Matth. xxvi. 39, 54. gives a decisive Testimony hereunto.

From what has been said therefore concerning the Beginning of St. John's History, as well as from the Evidence of so many other Texts of Scripture express to the same Purpose, in which the Divine Nature and Power of Jesus the Son of God, the Saviour of the World, are asserted in opposition to the Notion advanc'd by you of the *Private Opinions* of the Apostles. I think it manifestly results as a just Inference from the whole, that they ought to be received upon the same Foot, and that they are derived from the same sacred Fountain of Inspiration and Authority, as any other Part of Holy Writ; and that these are Doctrines of the greatest Importance to Christianity, forasmuch as if they were discarded, the whole Scheme of the Gospel Revelation, and the Sum of the Arguments and Reasonings of our Lord himself, and of the inspired Writers of the New Testament, must be demolish'd and fall to the Ground. The necessary Tendency of your Principles, I think I have clearly proved to reduce us entirely to the Law of Nature or the Moral Law, it being impossible for you to exclude so great a Part of the New Testament, as

must

must be unavoidably excluded in Pursuance of your Scheme, without destroying the Credibility and Evidence of the whole. I hope, therefore upon a deliberate Review, you will give up your Principles, as altogether indefensible and groundless, as they undermine the Foundation of the whole of Revealed Religion. The Papists have done a very great Injury to the Sacred Scriptures, by soifing in the Apocryphal Books, by a Decree of the pretended General Council of *Trent*, and their Doctrine of a Treasure of Traditions in their Custody is of a very pernicious Tendency: But still as they acknowledge the Divine Inspiration of the true Canon of Scripture, this Acknowledgment will be an invincible Bar to their overthrowing the *True Gospel*, provided Men have Opportunity and Inclination to peruse and study it. But if the Notions which you have broach'd of the *Private Opinions* of the Apostles be receiv'd, all the Evidence we have of the Truth of the Christian Religion must sink and be confounded at once; and I cannot think I am guilty of a Breach of good Manners, if I tell you, that for any thing you have produced as yet, your Insinuations with respect to the Beginning of St. John, are no better supported than that of the *Mohammedans*, with regard to another Passage of the same Apostle's, wherein our Lord promises his Disciples, that the Holy Ghost should be given them after his Departure. *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth,* John xiv. 16, 17. Now here the *Mohammedans* confidently aver that the Name of their pretended Prophet was expressly mention'd, as the Person intended by our Lord under the Denomination of the *Comforter*, and hereupon charge the Christians as guilty of expunging this Part of what they will have our Saviour to have delivered,

but

but don't pretend to shew how or when, nor produce one single Copy of the New Testament in Confirmation of what they boldly affirm. If notwithstanding all, you think fit to go on and vindicate what you have written, to prevent multiplying Words to no Purpose, it will be necessary for you to enter into the Merits of the Cause at once, and bring forth your *strong Reasons* upon which you found your peculiar Notion concerning the *Private Opinions* of the Sacred Writers: Either you have some Method to distinguish the inspired Part from the uninspired, or that which consisteth only in the private Opinions of the Writers, or not, if you are in Possession of any such Spirit of Discernment, you are obliged both as a Man and a Christian, to discover it to the World, and indeed if there were no stronger Reason for it, this would be sufficient that you are no fair Antagonist without so doing; because let a Man advance what he will against any of your Sentiments, he must be uncertain whether he is doing any thing to Purpose or not, as not knowing but his principal Strength of Argument may be objected against and nullified, as being drawn from such Texts as will not be allowed to be of Divine Authority, but shall be condemned as unsufficient, and dwindle away into mere *Private Opinion*. Either therefore make an honourable Retraction, or publish to Mankind a new Edition of the New Testament, without the Interpolation or Addition of the *Private Opinions* of the several Writers that compiled it in it's present Form. But as this is an Attempt which I believe you will never engage in, I shall conclude with assuring you that I have been all along arguing not against your Person but your Opinions, and I have no other View in this Address to you and the World, but to throw in my Mite towards settling the Faith of Christians, and preventing a

Man

Man of good Parts from running on a wrong Scent, Some Hours of that Time, which, from the unavoidable Circumstances of my present Situation, must be supposed in general to be very irksome and tedious, are hereby employed; and though in the Title of your Book you particularly address yourself to those that esteem themselves, or are esteemed by others, to be the Ministers of Christ: Yet as a Layman, esteeming my self to be equally concern'd with any, in the Consequences of what you have publish'd, I was willing to bear my Testimony in behalf of the Gospel of our Common Lord, and, to contribute according to my Capacity, to obviate and refute whatsoever Principles may be divulged, which have an apparent Tendency to undermine the Christian Religion, and to stagger the Faith of Christians: And if you should apprehend that any thing of Acrimony has dropp'd from my Pen, (which I am not conscious of) I hope you will make those Favourable Allowances which a Man has some Title to lay Claim to, who is a Sufferer under the Effects of a Complication of Treachery and Injustice,

I am, SIR,

Tours, &c.

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F I N I S.